

Program Performance Report

Funded Projects in FFY09

Child Advocacy Centers

During FFY09, CJA grant money was provided to the Child Advocacy Centers in Missouri to improve the processes by which Missouri responds to cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse or exploitation. Forensic examinations, victim interviews, referrals to treatment providers, gathering and retention of forensic evidence used for criminal prosecution of the offender were made possible through funding provided by the CJA grant.

There are 15 Child Advocacy Centers located across the State, with some locations having satellite offices and serving children and families in the surrounding counties. The availability of these centers allows for a one-time interview of the victim as well as the opportunity for the physical examination to occur in the same location, preventing unnecessary stress and trauma to the child victim and their family. Child Advocacy Centers often facilitate scheduling the exams and interviews to further assist in the investigation and criminal prosecution process.

SAFE-CARE network providers (physicians and other medical providers who conduct forensic examinations) work in close collaboration with the Child Advocacy Centers. The mission statement of the SAFE-CARE Network continues to be “to improve outcomes for children who are victims of, or at risk for, child maltreatment by enhancing the skills and role of the medical provider in a multidisciplinary context.”

In SFY (09), 2,493 SAFE-CARE exams were conducted, and there were 87 participating SAFE-CARE providers.

While data related to the successful prosecution of perpetrators involved in cases that are served by the Child Advocacy Centers is not available, it is well established that the forensic process provided by the Advocacy Centers, including the handling of evidence and quality of victim interviews, continues to improve the investigation and judicial handling (prosecution) process.

The majority of forensic interviewers who conduct the victim interviews use a model interviewing technique called “Finding Words”. By using this technique, the quality of the victim interview is raised to a standard that prosecutors consider helpful in the prompt and successful resolution of civil, and particularly, the criminal court proceedings.

CJA Support for the Child Advocacy Centers facilitated compliance with RSMo 210.001.1, which designates Child Advocacy Centers in Missouri.

Total **\$ 250,683**

REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE—THREE YEAR REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

During 2007-2010, as part of the ongoing education, assessment and review of activities of the Children's Division and the State Courts, the Task Force was provided with multiple and regular presentations and reports. The Task Force completed a review of a foster child fatality and made recommendations as a result of that review. In addition, the Task Force has renewed their commitment to implementing the comprehensive strategic plan that was developed 2005-2007. The Task Force celebrated the Children's Division accomplishment of receiving accreditation through the Council on Accreditation in 2010. In addition, six new Task Force members were appointed.

In 2008, the Task Force on Children's Justice reviewed a case regarding the fatality of a foster child. This review is part of the Task Force's function as a Citizen's Review Panel. For this review, The Task Force requested that the Office of Child Advocate be involved as well. Interviews were conducted, various reports gathered, and state policies and training plans were discussed.

Task Force Recommendation #1: It is recommended that knowledge of case history be an imperative in order for a case to be assigned to a new worker. CJA notes that 'flagging' a case might prove helpful to assure those with more complex needs receive the service and supports they need.

It is expected that when there is a change of worker, the worker leaving the child's case or their supervisor will review the case situations and the needs of the child with the new worker. Whenever possible, those children or youth with elevated needs are assigned to a seasoned worker. Where this is not possible, there is more intense supervision expected. This can be by more frequent supervisory conferences, lowered supervisor to staff ratio and/or additional consultative support of a Children's Services Specialist. All workers meet with their supervisors regularly to discuss child-specific needs and new workers within their first year of service receive more structured learning and mentoring through the use of an on-the-job training professional development guide.

Recommendation #2: It is recommended that efforts continue to be made to limit the number of unnecessary moves. CJA asks that the Children's Division review its policies in this regard and also that there is quality assurance methods to ensure Family Support Team meetings are occurring when a move for a child is necessary.

Reducing the number of moves children and youth in care experience continues to be a goal of the division. Case readings do occur at the supervisory level to assess practice, including the holding of Family Support Team (FST) meetings. A memo is in production that will accentuate the purpose of these pre-move FSTs. There is concern that all FST members can get caught up in discussing the crisis that has occurred to cause a change of placement to be imminent, rather than using the time to brainstorm with the placement provider what supports/services might be helpful

to stabilize the current placement, or if not possible, to increase the likelihood of the new placement being successful. The training guide for workers includes a segment on the effects of multiple placements on a child's development. Placement stability is a topic that has been and will continue to be covered with staff at all levels of the Continuous Quality Improvement process. Though we are not where we want to be, it is important to note that we track the percentage of children who have two or fewer moves within a 12 month period, and we have increased from 74.3% in 2004 to 80.1% in 2008. We want to see this progress continue.

Recommendation #3: This is a child specific recommendation that a child not be placed in residential treatment unless her current foster care placement proves untenable. CJA notes that all children in a foster home who experience a traumatic event should receive services to assist in processing the event and moving forward.

The Children's Division (CD) has tools and policies in place in an effort to assure that all children and youth are placed in the least restrictive environment possible. As mentioned above, we have and will continue to work to see the children that come into care experience as few moves as possible. Finding the most appropriate placement at the earliest opportunity and then providing the support necessary to the child and placement provider before the placement becomes unstable is our goal. Short term services are available to all children in a foster home when a traumatic event occurs.

Recommendation #4: This is a child specific recommendation regarding a case worker spending time with the child outside of the home. CJA notes that workers should receive supervision and instruction regarding appropriate boundaries with youth and that upper management should assure that workers follow the recommendations of the FST. In addition, CJA comments that appropriate ramifications for staff members are needed when staff fail to follow policy and/or safety standards. CJA further notes the need for an outside facilitator/mediator when an FST is not seeing progress or is struggling in their work together.

Case assignments are made on a case-by-case basis. As mentioned above, new workers are given more intensive supervision and given a copy of the NASW code of Ethics during the on-the-job training process. Supervisors also educate staff by coaching and leading by example. Safety is discussed with staff during individual conferences. The front line supervisor is responsible for ensuring that workers follow through with the recommendations of the FST and court orders. Individual conferences are held weekly to discuss individual children and families as well as other topics. Peer record reviews and supervisory record reviews using a case review tool are done quarterly by teams and arranged through the Quality Assurance unit.

The Children's Division operates under the merit system. Corrective action and disciplinary activities are clearly outlined through the Human Resource Center. DSS Policy 2-124 specifically addresses how to handle discipline of employees and states "the purpose of this policy is to provide a procedure for correcting and improving employee conduct/performance,

and if necessary, administering discipline. Disciplinary actions will be corrective, fit the nature of the problem and be applied in a consistent and non-discriminatory manner. It may be appropriate to use several types of actions designed to address an employee's problem(s). Counseling, Employee Assistance Program, Corrective Action Plan, Letter of Concern, Verbal Reprimand, Written Reprimand, Notice of Unacceptable Conduct, Suspension Demotion and Dismissal" Regional managers and the Division's Designated Principle Assistant are usually consulted concerning severe disciplinary issues.

The Children's Division has contracts for consultative services across the state. These contractors can provide training on specifically identified needs and provide case consultation on specific case situations. This includes the ability to assist in facilitating a FST on a one time or short term basis. Currently the Children's Division is partnering with OSCA and private contractors to develop and present advanced facilitation training. This is to be training for all disciplines to attend, not just case managers. This will be rolled out across the state and then we hope to have it available on DVD for repeated use.

The St. Louis project mentioned is a new extreme recruitment grant just begun to look for family or kin for youth who have been in care for two years and need a permanent home. We will not know of the success for over a year.

Recommendation #5: It is recommended that crisis counseling be made available to all foster home inhabitants within 24 hours of a death of someone residing in the home. CJA agrees.

Foster families and other inhabitants of the foster home can have access to crisis counseling sessions. This can be done through MO HealthNet, the local DMH administrative agent's 800 number, or using Children's Treatment Services. The method depends on the desire of the family members and the type of coverage or resource available to them locally.

Recommendation #6: It is recommended that in-service training on Reactive Attachment Disorder be available for foster parents. CJA also feels this should be available to case managers.

RAD training is currently available to foster parents and case managers. It is available by request. The Children's Division is working with MHD clinical staff and DMH to determine the most efficient way to get more information out to foster parents and case managers regarding the more prevalent psychological diagnoses within the population of children and youth in care.

Recommendation #7: Steps should be taken to ensure that foster parents are fully informed and involved regarding the diagnosis and medication of children under their care. CJA agrees and asks CD remind staff of this obligation and that foster parents be included in therapeutic sessions.

Current policy requires that all information regarding the child is shared with the placement provider. The CD is currently in discussions with MHD regarding access to real time information through that division's Cyber Access screens. We will be working with medical professionals also in determining the most effective processes we should have in place to determine how to most effectively use the information gained. The CD agrees that foster parents should be encouraged to participate in therapeutic sessions when recommended by the therapist.

Recommendations #8: FSTs should be encouraged and charged with the responsibility to explore and consider creative plans designed to address the unique circumstances of each child. CJA recommends the team focus on the needs of the child and if at an impasse, take situation to management or a judge for final recommendation.

Instruction is given to case managers in the Child Welfare Manual on how to proceed with a FST when there is a lack of consensus and as mentioned earlier, CD is working with OSCA on advanced training for all FST members. Also previously mentioned, outside assistance can be requested and authorized. Various case reviews are done quarterly, but the Children's Division executive team is evaluating the need for an additional quarterly review more specific to those children or youth in care for two years.

In 2009, the Task Force met quarterly.

Recommendations for the CD included:

- It would be beneficial to Community Stakeholders to hear former foster youth discuss their experiences in foster care. The Task Force feels that often Stakeholders have little to no understanding of how decisions made effect foster youth and their experiences.

Response: The Children's Division is committed to having the stakeholders hear from current and former foster youth. This commitment will be fulfilled by assuring at least one foster youth is in attendance at CJA meetings. At this time the CJA task force has a youth representative as well as a foster care graduate.

- School-based mentoring programs for youth in foster care as Teachers often don't know the answers regarding foster youth aging out of the system.

Response: The Children's Division is committed to looking at ways to reach out to foster youth in their school system as well as heightening awareness of the issues facing youth

aging out of the system with school personnel, teachers and counselors. This commitment is being fulfilled in cooperation with the School Based Social Work program and the Education Workgroup which includes open communication with school/educational liaisons.

- Not supportive of proposed legislation regarding jury trials for terminating a parent's rights

Response: The Children's Division provided information to the task force regarding the delays in permanency that might result from this legislation and appreciated the support of the task force in opposing the legislation. The task force and the Division are committed to assuring that the elements of abuse and neglect are identified at time of removal and all possible steps are taken to ensure youth may return home whenever safety may be assured. Additionally the task force is committed to overseeing the investigation and prosecution process in abuse and neglect to assure that the rights of the youth are protected and best served throughout that process avoiding the need for court intervention through jury trial at the time of TPR.

- Children's Division to maintain its achieved Accreditation (COA) Standards

Response: The Children's Division has achieved Accreditation and appreciates the commitment of the task force to assisting in any way possible to maintain the accreditation status.

- Not supportive of the elimination of Mandated Reporter Referrals and Preventative Service Referrals.

Response: The Children's Division regrets having to eliminate these referrals because of budget shortfalls. However, the Division is committed to working with the task force to ensure that no reports of Child Abuse and Neglect pass the Child Welfare System without the appropriate investigation. Additionally, the Division is working with the task force to prevent abuse/neglect in the situations previously covered by M and P referrals through heightened public awareness for child abuse and neglect issues and partnership and collaboration with community partners that can assist in prevention of abuse and neglect.

Courts Presentations:

- Presentation by OSCA on the Fostering Court Improvement project
- Training efforts

Children's Division Presentations:

- CFSR Review and Findings
- On-going DSS and CD Budget Updates at quarterly Task Force meetings
- Presentation on Accreditation with regular updates
- Contracted Case Management updates—ongoing
- Children's Division and HB1453
- PIP proposed recommendations
- Child Welfare outcome measures provided
- Updates on Children's Division initiatives and policy

Proposed Legislation was discussed:

- HB1233-Revises the criteria regarding the appointment of a guardian ad litem, the designation of volunteer advocates for children, and the best interest of the child standard in certain court proceedings.
- SB-652--Allows jury trials in termination of parental rights actions

The Task Force is re-examining the 2005 Strategic Plan that was developed to give the Task Force focus on their goals and tasks set forth in order to achieve those goals. The Task Force is determining what goals are still applicable, what goals have been met and what new goals they wish to accomplish. The Task Force recognizes the poor budget outlook for Missouri and the challenge that it creates for the Children's Division to meet the growing needs of its children and families. The Task Force will continue to seek ways to assist the Division in meeting these challenges in respect to the successful investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases.

CJA Task Force Recommendations

2-24-2009

OCA Recommendation 1: It is recommended that knowledge of case history be an imperative in order for a case to be assigned to a new worker.

CJA Response/Recommendations:

- Flag cases that contain certain criteria that may make a case more difficult or have complexity due to the following factors:
 - Length of Time in Care
 - Level of Care required (Behavioral, Career, Medical, Residential)
 - Mental Health Diagnosis
 - Frequency of moves
- Cases that are "flagged" should only be assigned to qualified or seasoned workers, Children's Service Worker II. If assigned to a less qualified worker or Children's Service Worker I, additional supervisory time should be required to assure that the worker becomes knowledgeable about the case and the specific needs of the family.
- The Task Force would like to recommend that Judge Cook contact Mary Sheffield to discuss the possibility of removing the "two year" time limit for Judges hearing cases.
 - Sometimes the only consistent member of the team is the Judge. If judges are turning over every two years due to a mandatory time limit, this can cause set backs in a case moving toward permanency.
 - New Judges do not have the same institutional knowledge that seasoned Judges have. Judges need to have a training period to become more knowledgeable. A decrease in the turnover of Judges would assist with Judges who have more knowledge hearing juvenile/family court cases.

OCA Recommendation 2: It is recommended that efforts continue to be made to limit the number of unnecessary moves for foster children.

CJA Response/Recommendations:

- The Task Force recommends reviewing the policy where this is addressed (reviewed by Task Force members present and appropriate to address this recommendation).
- The Task Force discussed the need to ensure that Family Support Team meetings are being held when a placement change for a foster child is necessary. The Task Force discussed the need to ensure that Children's Division is monitoring this through Quality Assurance measures. (This was discussed by the Task Force, however was not a formal recommendation).

OCA Recommendation 3: It is recommended that residential care for Child A be an option only if his/her present foster care environment proves untenable. Hopefully, Child A's next move will be to a permanent family. Nineteen prior placements are far too many.

CJA Response/Recommendations:

- The Task Force feels that it is important to ensure that children in alternative care, who experience a traumatic event receive appropriate wrap around services following the trauma to assist the child in processing the event appropriately and to assist in permanency for the child.

OCA Recommendation 4: The OCA has learned that the case worker for Child A & Child B would occasionally take the children away from the home, take them out to eat, etc. The OCA believes this practice was well-intended and that it allowed for sibling interaction. It is recommended, however that this practice with Child A be discontinued.

CJA Response/Recommendations:

- The Task Force understands the desire of the workers to build rapport with the children and youth on their caseloads, however this case is a good example of the need to ensure that workers have additional training on appropriate boundaries with children and youth on their caseloads.
 - The Task Force feels that Children's Division needs to assure that new workers are provided with appropriate supervision and that supervisors are training their workers appropriately on "safety" standards. Example: Male caseworkers should not transport female youth without another party being present.
 - The Task Force feels that Upper Managements (supervisors, field support managers and Circuit Managers) are responsible to assure that workers are following recommendations set forth by the Family Support Team.
 - The Task Force feels that it is important for there to be appropriate ramifications for staff members who fail to follow policy and safety standards. They would recommend an external review panel that could be comprised to supervise or evaluate "problem" areas. Have a wide range of individuals on the review team who could assist in development of a corrective action plan. Have Social Services Department set up an independent review committee to work for the director in assisting to provide external reviews.
- The Task Force feels that in this case the Family Support Team was not effective. They would recommend in situations where the child has been in care for a lengthy period of time without progress toward permanency that a Trained Mediator be brought in to assist in Team Meetings to bring focus back to the permanency needs of the child.
 - The Task Force would recommend that they be given the opportunity to review the practices of St. Louis City's pilot program, as the program currently encourages a practice of reviewing cases of children who have been in care for two years or longer in an effort to determine case specific

needs and eliminate barriers toward permanency. The Task Force feels that they would like to determine if this would be an appropriate measure to implement in policy.

- The Task Force would like to recommend that the Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance specialists be invited to attend a Task Force meeting to brief Task Force members on current measures they are implementing across the state to improve practice.
- The Task Force would recommend that the Jackson County review team increase their level of supervision. The Task Force feels that the Jackson County review team should be provided with a copy of the report completed by the Office of the Child Advocate as the review they received was “white washed”.

OCA Recommendation 5: It is recommended that crisis counseling be made available to all foster home inhabitants within 24 hours of the death of someone residing in the home.

CJA Response/Recommendations:

- The Task Force was made aware that Child A did have access to Crisis Counseling as he/she had access to his/her counselor. The Task Force however feels that it is imperative for the foster family and other inhabitants of the foster home to receive crisis counseling following the event of a death of a household member.
 - The Task Force would like to recommend that the Children’s Division follow up with local offices to ensure that contact has been made with local Department of Mental Health representatives to create a plan of action to ensure that all household members and staff are allowed access to crisis counselors should a similar event occur in the future.

OCA Recommendation 6: It is recommended that In-Service Training for Reactive Attachment Disorder be available for all foster parents, as determined necessary by the Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Advisory Board and per the Foster Parents Bill of Rights, Chapter 210.566 (1) RSMo.

CJA Response/Recommendations:

- The State Foster Board has submitted a request to Children’s Division for RAD training.
 - The Task Force feels that it would be important for this training to be available for foster parents as well as Children’s Division staff.
 - MO HealthNet is also looking at other pertinent diagnoses where additional training for foster parents would be beneficial. The Task Force would recommend that the Children’s Division provide training on Mental Health Diagnoses that are common for children and youth in care so that foster parents and Children’s Division staff can be trained on best practices in working with children and youth with mental health needs.

OCA Recommendation 7: It is recommended that steps be taken to ensure that foster parents at all levels are fully informed and involved regarding the diagnosis and medication of children under their care.

CJA Response/Recommendations:

- The Task Force recommends that Children's Division ensure that all Foster Parents and placement providers are given any and all mental health information as well as medication information as mandated by law.
 - The Task Force would also recommend that Children's Division Staff be reminded that they are obligated to share any and all diagnosed mental health, physical health, and behavioral condition that the child may have prior to placement and continue to provide updates to placement providers as additional information is gathered.
- The Task Force would additionally recommend that Children's Division ensure that all foster providers and other placement providers are given a copy of the Foster Parents Bill of Rights.
- The Task Force recommends that a subcommittee review the "Initial Placement Form" utilized by Children's Division workers to determine the appropriateness of the form.
- The Task Force would recommend that Foster Parents be encouraged to participate in therapeutic sessions as a participant, not only as a consultant, especially in situations where a child has been diagnosed with Reactive Attachment Disorder as building stability and attachments should be focused on in a therapeutic setting.

OCA Recommendation 8: It is recommended that Family Support Teams be encouraged and charged with the responsibility to explore and consider creative plans designed to address the unique circumstances of each child.

CJA Response/Recommendations:

- The Task Force expects that the Family Support Team function in a manner to assure that the child's needs including permanency are considered.
 - If the Family Support Team is at an impasse, or unable to come to a consensus regarding a decision in some areas this would be taken to management or to a Judge for final recommendation.
 - The Task Force would recommend the utilization of an outside Mediator be brought in to assist in moving the team toward a decision that will be in the best interest of the child. (This was done in the Jackson County case, was not effective).
 - The Task Force would recommend in depth reviews be completed for children and youth in care who meet "red flag" criteria:
 - Time in care exceeds two years
 - Multiple placement disruptions and changes in a short amount of time (3 or more moves in a six month time period)

***PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS FINANCED BY THE TASK FORCE ON
CHILDREN'S JUSTICE***

<i>Year, Month</i>	<i>Project, Amount Awarded</i>
2007, September	MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) - \$9,000.00 Fall Educational Conference Scholarships
2008, January	MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) - \$4,200.00 Spring Educational Conference Scholarships
2008, October	MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) - \$8,775.00 Fall Educational Conference Scholarships
2009, January	The Child Center - \$10,000.00 5 th Annual Prevention & Interventions Conference
2009, April	MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) - \$5,754.00 Spring Educational Conference Scholarships
2009, April	MO Kids First - \$10,000.00 Finding Words Scholarship for Spring/Fall
2009, July	STAT - \$9,852.66 Purchase of Investigative Equipment
2009, September	MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) - \$5,754.00 Fall Educational Conference Scholarships
2010, February	MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) - \$9,425.00 Spring Educational Conference Scholarships
2010, February	MO Kids First - \$10,000.00 Finding Words Scholarships for April, June, August and November 2010
2010, February	MO Prosecution Services - \$9,988.00 Training Development for the Investigation & Prosecution of Child Abuse/Neglect
2010, February	Changing Our Parenting Experience (C.O.P.E.) - \$10,000.00 Promoting healthy parenting skills to stop child abuse and neglect

MISSOURI TASK FORCE ON CHILDREN'S JUSTICE BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

Membership

The Missouri Task Force on Children's Justice shall consist of 21 members who shall be appointed jointly by the Director of the Department of Social Services and the Missouri Supreme Court Chief Justice. The membership shall include, but not be limited to: law enforcement; judges and attorneys involved in both civil and criminal court proceedings related to child abuse and neglect; child advocates, including both attorneys for children and, where such programs are in operation, court appointed special advocates (CASA); health and mental health professionals; individuals representing child protective service agencies; individuals experienced in working with children with disabilities; and representatives of parents' groups.

The membership shall be representative of the various geographic regions and socioeconomic population of the state. Members of the task force shall be residents or employees in the State of Missouri. Not more than eleven members of the board shall be from the same political party. Members of the task force shall be appointed for a term of four years. Reappointment will be limited to three terms. Initial appointment will be comprised of staggering membership by thirds to serve two, three and four year terms, respectively.

Nonvoting members may be invited to attend, participate, or present information to the task force on an ad hoc basis. Their participation will be time-limited, at the discretion of the co-chairpersons.

ARTICLE II

Powers and Duties

The task force shall meet with the Director of the Children's Division and the State Courts Administrator, or their designees, a minimum of four times each year for the purpose of reviewing the activities of the division and shall file a written report with the Governor, General Assembly, the Chief Justice and the Director of the Department of Social Services regarding recommendations on agency policy and practice and the family/juvenile court practice, including their collaborative efforts with community child welfare agencies and other nonpublic entities. The task force, or a committee thereof, shall review individual case information as frequently as it deems necessary.

The task force shall review and evaluate state investigative, administrative and both civil and criminal judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect. The task force shall act as an Advisory Committee in which the task force will review, provide input, and evaluate DSS Children's Division priorities and progress. The task force shall make policy and training recommendations. The task force shall monitor the progress made on the recommendations included in the Final Report issued in June 2003 by the Missouri Supreme Court Commission on Children's Justice, and any subsequent reports that may be issued by the commission, and

annually notify the Chief Justice and the Director of the Department of Social Services of their findings. The task force shall review and the State shall submit an annual application to the Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, for funding and shall have the authority to expend such funding, as appropriated by the Missouri General Assembly, for purposes of administration, operation, and to make grants of funds to be used in compliance with state and federal law. The task force will actively participate in strategizing public awareness efforts of DSS Children's Division.

The task force shall act as a Citizen Review Panel. Its duties as a Citizen Review Panel shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Reviewing the Children's Division's compliance with the State Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Plan, child protection standards;
- Assisting the Children's Division in the coordination of foster care/adoption program;
- Assisting in the review of child fatalities and near fatalities;
- Examining policies, procedures, and where appropriate, specific cases; and
- Generating an annual report to be released to the public.

The Citizen Review Panel shall have access to any Children's Division case files and records necessary to the performance of its responsibilities. All members of the task force are subject to the confidentiality provisions set forth in the Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri, Section 210.150, RSMo.

No official task force business shall be conducted without a legally constituted quorum. The attendance of 14 task force members at a meeting shall constitute a quorum. Unless otherwise provided for by prior approval of the task force, all actions taken on behalf of the task force must be approved by a vote of 2/3 of the members present or 14 members, whichever is less. The task force shall have the authority to delegate limited approval authority to any standing committee as is necessary for the complete and efficient fulfillment of the task force's responsibilities.

The task force shall have the authority to propose amendments or modifications to these By-Laws. Such proposal shall be made to the director of the Children's Division and the State Court Administrator and presented by the director and administrator to the Director of the Department of Social Services and the Chief Justice of the Missouri Supreme Court for approval. Upon approval by the Director of Social Services and the Chief Justice of the Missouri Supreme Court, any such amendment or modification shall be effective.

ARTICLE III

Committees

The task force shall have three standing committees: Finance, Legislative/Policy and Training. The chairpersons and members of each committee shall be named by the co-chairpersons of the task force. Each committee shall consist of at least five members of the task force who shall be voting members. Three voting committee members shall constitute a quorum. Each committee may also include not more than six non-voting members who are neither members of the division

staff nor members of the task force. The co-chairpersons of the task force shall jointly appoint the nonvoting members of the committees, if appropriate. The duty of the nonvoting members shall be to confer with and advise the voting members of the committees on matters before the committees. All actions or proposals approved by the committees by majority vote must be presented to the task force for final approval.

The Finance Committee shall be responsible for assisting with developing and implementing the strategic plan of task force priorities and commit to funding projects devoted to those priorities. The Finance Committee shall establish written guidelines regarding the dispersion of funds, subject to the approval of the task force. The Finance Committee shall make recommendations on funding proposals/projects to the task force. Such funding shall be utilized to assist the priorities of the DSS Children's Division, as designed and implemented, to comply with the requirements of CAPTA. The Finance Committee does not have the authority to fund such proposals/projects without task force approval, except that the task force shall have the authority to delegate to the Finance Committee the authority to approve general administration and operation expenditures, and grants of an amount not to exceed \$3,000.00.

The Legislation/Policy Committee shall be responsible for reviewing DSS Children's Division policy, priorities and progress toward recommendations, in addition to reviewing legislation impacting DSS and the courts.

The Training Committee shall be responsible for assisting DSS Children's Division and Office of State Court Administrator (OSCA) to focus efforts on multidisciplinary training annually. Additionally, this committee shall review and evaluate DSS Children's Division's training strategies and its communication plan.

ARTICLE IV

Officers

The officers of the task force shall be co-chairpersons, both of whom shall be designated by the Chief Justice of the Missouri Supreme Court and the Director of the Department of Social Services.

The co-chairpersons shall preside at all meetings of the task force, shall execute all instruments for and on behalf of the task force, and shall perform such other duties as the board may prescribe or authorize.

The terms of both co-chairpersons shall run for two years of their four-year task force term, and each co-chairperson may be reappointed for one additional two-year term.

The co-chairpersons shall appoint the chairperson and membership of each standing committee. Committee Chairpersons: Finance, Legislative/Policy, and Training will adhere to the above requirements. The task force co-chairpersons may appoint additional committees as deemed appropriate.

ARTICLE V

Attendance and Expenses

All task force members are expected to actively participate and attend the regular meetings of the task force. When a task force member is absent from three of the four scheduled meetings during a calendar year without giving notice or reason for being unable to attend, the member can be removed from the task force. The task force by a majority vote can recommend to the Director of Department of Social Services and the Supreme Court Chief Justice removal of a task force member. Upon approval by the department director and the Supreme Court Chief Justice, the member who is removed from the board will be notified of this action in writing by the co-chairperson of the Missouri Children's Justice Act Task Force.

Task force members shall be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in attending the task force meetings and conducting approved business. DSS' Children's Division and OSCA shall jointly provide administrative support to the task force.

Task Force on Children's Justice—Mission Statement

(From By-laws—June 2005)

The purpose of the Task Force is to advocate for improvements in Missouri's Child Welfare System....by making recommendations on (1) DSS policy and practices; (2) family and juvenile court practices; and (3) collaborative efforts with community child welfare and other nonpublic entities.

The Task Force also is to:

1. Examine administrative, investigative, and criminal/civil processing of cases involving child abuse and neglect;
2. Review, provide input, and evaluate the priorities/progress of the DSS Children's Division;
3. Make policy, legislative and training recommendations;
4. Assist in developing public awareness strategies for the Children's Division; and
5. Serve as a Citizen Review Panel.

Task Force on Children's Justice—Vision Statement

(June 2005)

1. Children are safe in their homes and communities.
2. Missouri's Child Protection System provides a comprehensive continuum of services including traditional and expanded services such as prevention, assessment, protection, support, treatment, health and education.
3. Agencies, partners, and stakeholders communicate, cooperate, coordinate and collaborate effectively.
4. The public understands, supports, recognizes and values the contributions of the Child Protection System.
5. Communities are actively involved in keeping children safe.
6. The Child Protection System has adequate, stable, and flexible funding, and is accountable for the use of its resources.
7. Staff are competent, motivated, and valued.